# Periodic Review - briefing note for students

**Introduction and context**

1. Every five years[[1]](#footnote-1), St George’s reviews each of its courses to ensure that the course is up-to-date, that the learning opportunities available to students are at least adequate and that the standards achieved by students compare favourably with those of students at other Universities.
2. Periodic reviews are carried out by periodic review panels. Senior staff at St George’s are members of these panels although a member of staff would not usually take part in a meeting if they are actively involved with the course under review. The panel co-opts external specialists from other Universities to help it in the review of courses.
3. Panels will usually include a student reviewer as a full member of the panel. The student reviewer will be from a different course.
4. As part of the process, the panel will hold a private meeting with students. The meeting usually lasts for between thirty and forty five minutes. The meetings are ‘open agenda’. This means that students can raise any matters of interest or concern to them. All issues raised by students are treated in confidence. The panel will take up matters raised by students with the course team but will not do so in a way that allows individuals to be identified.
5. A report of each review is publicly available. The report will identify things that the course team does well (‘good practice’) and things that could be improved (‘action points’). [The report is published on the web](https://www.sgul.ac.uk/about/our-professional-services/quality-and-partnerships-directorate/quality-assurance-at-st-georges/periodic-review-and-other-quality-assurance-reports) and is available to staff, students and members of the public.

**What the review panel might ask**

1. As noted above, meetings with students are open-agenda. This means that it is difficult to predict exactly what the panel members will ask. Even so, what follows is a selection of the type of questions that might come up. Please remember that the list is by no means exhaustive; panel members will ask about anything that interests them. At the end of the meeting, students may also be asked by the panel if there are any additional topics that they wish to raise.
2. Here are some sample questions…

## General questions

Why did you choose your course? What information about George’s, its courses and the cost of study was available to you? Was the information accurate? Was it complete?

Your expectations – has the experience here met your expectations?

The good things about the course– what are the things that should be retained?

The not so good things – what do you think could be done better?

How are your views about the course sought? Are your views influential or do you have doubts about the seriousness with which your feedback is considered?

Do you know what is expected of you as a student? Do you know what you need to do to be a successful student? What standards are you expected to achieve? Are course regulations clear and accessible?

Would you recommend the course?

## Induction arrangements

Were you prepared for your studies and integrated into the academic and social life of St George’s? Was the transition to university life smooth and painless?

# Teaching and learning

Is a range of teaching methods used? Is there a balance between large and small group teaching?

Are accurate assumptions made about your knowledge, study skills and your level of competency in examination techniques?

What are your impressions of the quality of teaching? Are you excited, engaged, enthused by the teaching?

Are lecturers well prepared for teaching sessions?

Are student guides and handbooks available, up-to-date and useful? Are other means of disseminating information used?

Do you know how to use periods set aside for self-managed study?

Workloads –is there variability between different lecturers and different modules?

Is technology – ‘virtual learning environments’ – used to help you learn?

# Course organisation

Is the course well organised? Are support staff available to help with routine queries and can they usually help you out?

Do you receive timetable information when you need it? Is the timetable well-balanced? Are changes to the timetable communicated in good time?

## Student support

Do you have a personal tutor? Do you understand the role of the personal tutor?

Are staff available? Approachable?

Do you know who to turn to if things go wrong?

## Placements

Were placement staff expecting you? Did they know why you were there?

Was the purpose of the placement clear to you?

Were you well supported when you were away from St George’s or left adrift? Did you know whom to turn to if things went wrong?

Was the learning environment adequate?

Were skills and competencies that you acquired on placement assessed?

## Assessment

Are formative assessment opportunities available? Formative assessment allows you to “rehearse” a particular type of assessment before you undertake the “real thing”.

Does the assessment reflect what you have been taught?

Are the assessment criteria and marking schemes clear? Do you know why you gained and lost marks?

What are your thoughts on the amount of assessment that you have to complete?

Is feedback prompt and useful?

# Resources

Are teaching rooms suitable for their intended purpose? Is the library stock sufficient? Are computing facilities adequate?

Are resources used effectively? For example, do room, laboratory and equipment-booking systems allow you to make best uses of these facilities?

1. A programme will normally be reviewed five years (and no more than six years) after the previous review was held, but validation and review Panels also have the discretion to set shorter approval periods. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)